

For that reason, SDAT carefully reviews accounts and obtains information from several external sources. One source is the rental license that each property owner in the County must obtain prior to offering residential property for rent. For information on how to obtain a rental license required under Montgomery County Law, contact the County Department of Housing and Community Affairs at 240-777-3636 or visit their website for more details on this program at http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Content/dhca/Licensing/licensing_landlord_tenant.asp

OTHER CHARGES AND FEES

Solid Waste Charge - All ratepayers are billed directly for County supported solid waste and recycling services, facilities and programs. The solid waste charge is made up of components which vary based on the services provided by the County. For non-residential property owners, the charge is based on the gross floor area and/or generator category on file, and for multifamily dwelling owners it is based on the number of units on file. Inquiries regarding solid waste charges should be directed to the County's Division of Solid Waste Services at 240-777-6410, or to their website at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/solidwaste

Water Quality Protection Charge - The Water Quality Protection Charge provides funds for a comprehensive inspection and maintenance program for stormwater facilities in the County. This program helps to protect streams, water supplies, and property by keeping stormwater facilities functioning properly so that they remain capable of removing pollution, recharging groundwater, protecting streambanks, and keeping roads and property from flooding. For more information, please call the County Department of Environmental Protection at 240-777-7763, or visit their website at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dep and look for the link to the Stormwater Facility Maintenance program.

Bay Restoration Fund Fee – All properties in the State of Maryland are levied a fee in support of a dedicated Bay Restoration Fund (BRF) used to improve the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay. Since most County taxpayers are on a sewer system and/or receive water service from their utility company, the majority of property owners pay this charge on their utility bill. Those who have a septic system and do not receive water service from WSSC – are levied the fee on their County property tax bill. The annual amount due is \$30.00 in levy year 2008. For more information, please call the Maryland Department of the Environment at 800-633-6101 or visit their website at www.mde.state.md.us/Water/bayrestoration.asp and review the details in the section “Chesapeake Bay Restoration Act.”



For Information Call: 240-777-8950 or
Visit our Website at:
www.montgomerycountymd.gov/finance
TTY: 240-777-8946 (Hearing Impaired Only)



Montgomery County, Maryland
Department of Finance

Tax Facts

Information About Your County Real Property Tax Bill

Dear Montgomery County Taxpayer:

Each year, we strive to balance delivering high quality services to our residents while maintaining a level of affordability. We must do this even as economic times make these important goals more difficult to achieve. In November 2007, our economic forecasts began to show a significant gap of \$400 million between projected revenues and expenditures for the coming fiscal year. We immediately instituted a mid-year savings plan, pulling back on current year expenditures and preparing a budget that slowed the rate of growth to a historically low level. We also imposed a hiring freeze on all but essential personnel; abolished positions and offered early retirement incentives.

Despite the fiscal challenges of the upcoming year, we will not be compromising the high quality of life that Montgomery County residents have come to expect. This year, we continue to focus on basic priorities: delivering excellent education, public safety and transportation; providing affordable housing and help for our most vulnerable residents; and protecting the environment against the threat of global warming.

This year, the property tax rate remains unchanged at 90.3 cents per \$100 of assessed value and includes a \$579 property tax credit for all owner-occupied residences. Despite this credit, property tax bills may present a burden to some homeowners. To assist homeowners with this burden, the Homeowners' Property Tax Credit Program is available to reduce taxes for those living on limited or fixed incomes. Households earning less than \$64,000 may be eligible for the County Supplemental tax credit, which averaged almost \$700 last year and benefited more than 4,800 County residents. In addition, a property tax credit for senior residents is available based on 25 percent of the combined State and County Homeowners' Tax Credit. We encourage everyone who believes they may qualify to apply for the Homeowners' Tax Credit. Just call 1-800-944-7403 or visit the County's website at www.montgomerycountymd.gov and click on "I Want To...."

The County Executive and Council share a commitment to broaden community participation and we welcome your comments and involvement.

Sincerely,

Isiah Leggett
Montgomery County
Executive

Mike Knapp
Montgomery County
Council President

SERVICES PROVIDED BY TAX REVENUES

County Property Tax – The General County tax is levied on all property in the County and funds, in part, such basic services as police protection, elementary and secondary education, the community college, transportation, health and social services, and libraries. There are additional County taxes that are levied either Countywide or in specially defined areas of the County to fund defined projects and programs. The following taxes are Countywide (all taxpayers pay these taxes): the Transit Tax, which funds public transportation services including the Ride On bus system, the Fire District Tax, which funds fire and rescue services, and the Advance Land Acquisition Tax, which funds land acquisitions by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC). Seven additional taxes are levied only in specially defined areas: the Metropolitan Tax funds M-NCPPC local park facilities and parks programs and the Regional Tax funds M-NCPPC planning and administrative programs. Five additional taxes fund recreation facilities and programs, storm drainage improvements, parking lot districts, urban districts, and noise abatement districts. Whether a taxpayer pays one of these special area taxes depends on where the property is located. To determine which Special Area taxes apply, please refer to the Tax Rate Schedule.

State Property Tax - This tax is levied by the State of Maryland and used for the payment of principal and interest on State bonds.

Municipal District Property Tax - This tax is levied by each municipal area within the County. Although the services provided by tax revenues differ for each municipality, it is used generally for services such as street and sidewalk maintenance, trash removal, tree care, sanitation, and police protection.

Development District Special Tax & Assessment - Properties in tax classes R061 (Kingsview Village Center) or R064 (West Germantown) are levied special taxes and assessments used to pay the debt service on bonds that finance specific infrastructure improvements.

TAX RATES AND TAX CREDITS

How the Tax Rate is Determined - The real property tax rate, which is set each year by the County Council, is an ad valorem tax, meaning it is applied to the assessed value of the property. The fully phased-in assessed value equals the full cash value of the property. The real property tax is levied annually on all taxable land and improvements.

Tax Rate Schedule - A tax rate schedule for all tax classes is available by calling 240-777-8950 or by clicking on "Tax Rates" under the link for "County Taxes" on the County website at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/finance

Charter Limit - Section 305 of the County Charter requires that “Unless approved by an affirmative vote of seven Council members, the Council shall not levy an ad valorem tax on real property to finance the budgets that will produce total revenue that exceeds the total revenue produced by the tax on real property in the preceding fiscal year plus a percentage of the previous year’s real property tax revenues that equals any increase in the Consumer Price Index as computed under this section. This limit does not apply to revenue from (1) newly constructed property, (2) newly rezoned property, (3) property that, because of a change in state law, is assessed differently than it was assessed in the previous tax year, (4) property that has undergone a change in use, and (5) any development district tax used to fund capital improvement projects.”

For levy year 2008, the County Council adopted tax rates that are at the same level as in the prior year, but that exceed the Charter Limit. To mitigate the effect of the increase in tax bills, the Council provides a one-time property tax credit of \$579 for each qualified owner-occupied residential property. In levy year 2008 (i.e. Fiscal Year 2009) revenues will exceed the Charter Limit by \$118 million.

Property Tax Disclosure – Effective April 1, 2008, Montgomery County requires that residential property owners who sell their home must estimate and disclose to the prospective buyer the property tax for the subsequent levy year. Since the buyer will not be eligible for the homestead tax credit in the first year following purchase of the new home, the difference between the current year’s tax and next year’s tax can be significant. This disclosure requirement assists the consumer when purchasing a home in the County. In order to obtain more information and review the online calculator, please visit the County’s Office of Consumer Protection website at <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/apps/OCP/Tax/index.asp> or call 240-777-3636.

Assessment Information - All real property in the County is subject to taxation, except that which is specifically exempt. Each property is assessed every three years by the State Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT). For more details about your assessment and the appeal process, please contact SDAT at 240-314-4510 or visit their website at www.dat.state.md.us

Tax Credit Information - The County offers many tax credits and exemptions against the real property tax for which you may be eligible. Please visit our website and click on the link “Property Tax Credit and Exemption Information” www.montgomerycountymd.gov/propertytaxcredits

Homestead Property Tax Credit - To assist homeowners who are affected by large assessment increases, the State of Maryland, Montgomery County, and municipalities limit the annual taxable assessment increase to 10% for owner-occupied residential properties, except for the Town of Kensington which lowered its limit to 5%, effective levy year 2006. This limit, called the Homestead Tax Credit, is not applicable the first year following the purchase of a home, and therefore the taxable assessment may be substantially higher than it was for the previous owner. The homestead tax credit is administered by SDAT. If you are eligible but did not receive the credit or wish to learn more about the program, please contact SDAT at 240-314-4510 or visit their website at www.dat.state.md.us/sdatweb/homestead.html

Homeowners Property Tax Credit - Maryland’s Homeowners Property Tax Credit and its Montgomery County supplement are administered by SDAT. These tax credits are granted to eligible homeowners of all ages, with the exception that taxpayers age 70 and older may file for three years of credits, retroactively. Applications for this program must be filed by September 1st. The program provides tax credits for homeowners who qualify on the basis of their household income as compared to their tax bill. Effective levy year 2005, the County supplemental program was greatly enhanced by (1) doubling the maximum property assessment amount used for computing the tax to \$300,000, and (2) changing the income formula to allow for eligibility at a higher income level. Effective levy year 2006, the State also enhanced its credit similar to the two enhancements noted above. For further information or to obtain an application form, contact SDAT at 1-800-944-7403, or visit their website at www.dat.state.md.us/sdatweb/htc.html

Senior Property Tax Credit – Starting last year, the County offers a property tax credit for senior residents. The credit is based on 25% of the combined State and County Homeowners Tax Credits. This credit is available to residential property owners, when one of the property owners is at least 70 years of age. If you applied for the Homeowners Tax Credit, SDAT has the age information to determine eligibility and there is no need to apply for this credit separately. However, you must apply for the Homeowners Tax Credit to be considered. If you have specific questions about this program, please call SDAT at 1-800-944-7403 or call the County at 240-777-8950.

Fire Sprinkler System Tax Credit - The County offers a one-time real property tax credit of up to 50% of the General County real property tax to partially offset the cost of installing an approved complete automatic sprinkler system used for fire protection in any detached single-family, any attached dwelling unit, or multi-family building in which a fire sprinkler system was not legally required to be installed. For more information or to obtain an application form, visit our website at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/finance and click on “County Taxes” or call 240-777-8950.

TAX PAYMENT INFORMATION

When Taxes are Due - Payments for annual bills and the first installment of semi-annual bills must be received on or before September 30th to avoid penalties and interest, and become delinquent on October 1st. The second semi-annual installment payment must be received on or before December 31st to avoid penalties and interest, and becomes delinquent January 1st. Delinquent taxes are subject to interest and penalties at the rate of 1 2/3 % per month until paid in full and are calculated on the net amount of the bill, after any credits are applied. Delinquent taxes, including unpaid penalty and interest charges, are a lien on the property and are sold in accordance to all applicable laws and regulations during the subsequent calendar year. A tax lien sale will also occur if the taxpayer owes an amount equal to the interest and penalty, even if the amount of the tax bill has been paid. Accounts eligible for tax lien sale are listed for four consecutive weeks in a Montgomery County newspaper and are subject to a \$25 advertising fee. Property tax accounts taken to “tax sale” are subject to redemption interest and may be subject to additional costs incurred by the certificate holder.

Taxes on owner-occupied properties are paid on a semi-annual schedule unless a taxpayer chooses to make both payments on or before September 30th. Taxpayers who escrow their payments may elect to pay annually, but must notify their lenders by May 1st of their intent to pay annually. Taxpayers who do not escrow their taxes will receive a tax bill that will permit them to pay on either a semi-annual or annual basis. Semi-annual bills include two payment coupons, while annual bills include only one coupon. Payments for partial year levies (three-quarter, half year, or one-quarter) for newly constructed properties are due 30 days after the bill is mailed.

Personal property taxes and real property taxes on residential rental units and commercial property are not eligible for semi-annual payment. For more information on the semi-annual program, please visit our website at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/finance and click on “Reviews & Bulletins” under the link for “County Taxes.”

How to Pay Taxes - Taxpayers have four options for paying their property tax bill:

1. Pay by electronic check, debit card, or credit card on the County’s website at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/finance
2. Pay by telephone using a debit card or credit card (VISA, MasterCard, American Express, and Discover) by calling: 1-888-255-0029.
3. Pay by mail with a check or money order payable to Montgomery County, Maryland and mailed to Montgomery County, Maryland, Box 9418, Gaithersburg, MD 20898-9418.
4. Pay in person at the Division of Treasury, 255 Rockville Pike (Monroe Street entrance), Suite L-15, Rockville, MD. Payment in person may be made by cash, check, money order, or Discover card only.

PLEASE NOTE: Payments by credit card and debit card are assessed a convenience fee of approximately 2.5% of the payment amount. **This fee is levied by the payment processing company and cannot be waived by Montgomery County.** Payments made by electronic check through our website are free of charge. Payments made in person using the Discover card are subject to the following fee schedule:

Payment Amount	Discover Fee
\$0.00 to \$500.00	\$ 5.00
\$500.01 to \$1,000.00	\$12.00
\$1,000.01 to \$2,000.00	\$24.00
\$2,000.01 to \$3,000.00	\$38.00
\$3,000.01 or more	\$48.00

Mortgage Information - All taxpayers in Montgomery County receive the original tax bill and are responsible for ensuring that their taxes are paid on time. Montgomery County displays in the Mortgage Information Box on the tax bill the name of your mortgage lender if it participates in the County’s electronic data retrieval and tax payment (mass-pay) program at the time the bill is prepared. Due to the high level of mortgage refinancing and mortgage sales in the financial markets, the County encourages taxpayers to review the lender information on their tax bills. The County makes available to all mass-pay participating lenders individual billing information for their retrieval and use in making escrowed payments. Property owners may wish to contact their lenders to ensure that their bills have been paid. If their lender does not have the correct billing information, the property owner should forward a copy of the tax bill to the lender. Disputes between taxpayers and their lenders arising from non- or late payment of taxes must be resolved by the taxpayers and lenders.

Even though taxpayers may have established an escrow account with their mortgage lender, lenders do not pay partial year levies for newly constructed properties. Therefore, taxpayers must ensure that payment is made. We encourage you to verify that your taxes have been received and whether you owe interest and penalty: you can check your account at the County’s website, you can call Finance, or visit our office on 255 Rockville Pike (Monroe Street entrance).

Change of Address - In Maryland, SDAT is the official custodian of all addresses relative to State and County taxes. If you wish to change your mailing address you must notify SDAT. You can receive a change of address form and instructions by calling 240-314-4510 or by visiting the SDAT website at www.dat.state.md.us. Please note that failure to change the mailing address does not relieve the taxpayer of the obligation to pay the property tax bill.

Principal Residence or Rental Property – SDAT determines if a residential property qualifies as a principal residence (i.e., owner-occupied). Properties listed as principal residence receive many benefits: the homestead tax credit, semi-annual property tax payment schedule, homeowner’s tax credit (if applicable), and a one-time property tax credit (if applicable).